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ASPECTS OF RELIGIOUS LIFE IN TEPOZTLAN *

ALLEN SPITZER
Associate Professor of Anthropology
Saint Louis University

For purposes of anthropological inquiry, it is suggested that a Catholic society be studied in terms of formal, nominal, cultural, and folk Catholicism. By formal Catholicism is meant the intrinsic position of the Roman Catholic Church, a concrete and specific organization with hierarchical roots in Rome. A formal Catholic might be defined as one who seriously practices the teachings of the Church, following Her rites and proscriptions, fully cognizant of what is expected, holding the beliefs maintained by the Church emanating from the high tradition downward. Nominal Catholicism, quite common in many parts of the world and within many societies, is an identifiable acceptance of membership in the Church, involving some allegiance to Her, but with little effort to follow faithfully those rites and proscriptions expected of the practicing Catholic. Cultural Catholicism, sometimes also referred to as social Catholicism, infers the social organization of the Church as a way of life in terms of Her impinging on other wishes and forms, such as a preference for a particular type of music or a specific form of ecclesiastical art, or for a way of life within the Catholic framework as it defines itself in ethnic and regional expression. Finally, folk Catholicism, sometimes spoken of as popular Catholicism, is Catholic practice which emanates from the people, and finds its expression in indigenous practices and customs, only distantly related to the Church's formal aspects, but not as a rule, in conflict with them. All four of these types—formal, nominal,

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121 795 cultural or social, and folk Catholicism—represent a part of the whole which is known as the Catholic Church. Wherever Catholicism is found, these forms may be found, sometimes interwoven, sometimes sufficiently distinct to be discerned as gradations on a continuum, running from the two polarities of formal to folk Catholicism.

114 795 The village of Tepoztlán in Morelos, Mexico, an Aztec community with a Catholic tradition beginning in the early days of the Conquest, was first described by Robert Redfield in his classical account of a Mexican Village[1]. Recently, Oscar Lewis has made a restudy, providing a more analytical source of data as gathered by him and his staff[2]. Redfield used his well-known holistic approach, while Lewis' work is more in the nature of a factor analysis. It was not feasible or desirable that either author eliminate a discussion of religion when reporting a predominantly Catholic society. Redfield pinpointed the religious activity of the Tepoztecans from the standpoint of ethnology, as is seen particularly in his chapter, "A Tepoztecan Book of Days"[3] describing the holy days and holidays which make up the religious life as well as the social organization of the people. Although he himself did not share the religious convictions of the people he studied, Redfield presents a very accurate and interesting account. In his restudy, Lewis speaks of the religious behaviour of the people, and in some ways reveals his own lack of familiarity with Catholic thought and practice. The restudy was valuable, however, because of the objectivity with which Lewis delineates some aspects of village life not emphasized by Redfield.

114 It is a common procedure in the physical sciences for one investigator to build upon the work of another, retesting, checking findings, and proceeding only after having verified the results of previous experimentation. This approach is fairly new in

[1] Robert Redfield, *Tepoztlán, A Mexican Village*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1930.
[2] Oscar Lewis, *Life in A Mexican Village, Tepoztlán Restudied*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1951.
[3] Redfield, *op. cit.*, Chapter VI, pp. 97-132. See also Chapter XI, "The Santo and the Veterano", pp. 193-204.

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the social sciences, particularly in ethnology. Readers are perhaps familiar with Lewis' point of view[4], and Redfield's rejoinders[5]. It apprears that what Redfield clarified was the rhythm of life and the flow of custom in this village, the strengths and assets of the people. Lewis, on the other hand, isolated those aspects of village life which expressed themselves in conflict form. Thus familial, social and sexual conflicts were brought into the foreground. That there are conflicts in all societies is admitted; that analysis of conflict therefore captures the inner essence of a small community may be questioned. Such a question does not, of course, eliminate the data presented by Lewis; it merely calls attention to his focus. In either case, objectively speaking, the investigator found what he sought, and reported what he observed. The result is that we have available two viewpoints about the life of this village. Our purpose was not to analyze the differences between Redfield and Lewis, but rather to build upon the foundation provided by their works and to seek further light on the religious life of the village.

The chief value of additional study along religious lines by an anthropologist who is also a practicing Catholic would lie in the opportunity thus provided for gaining deeper insight into the religious life of the people, by an attempt to discover how the Church looks upon Her own problems in this village. This calls for considerable objectivity as well as an awareness of the intent of the formal Church.

Redfield has remarked to the writer that the Catholic observer holds at least an advantage of seeing how the Church looks upon Herself and Her own problems[6]. This introduces a new methodological note, as the Catholic scientist observes the Church's position in the formal or high tradition as it inter-

[4] Lewis, *op. cit.*

[5] Robert Redfield, *The Primitive World and Its Transformations.* Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1953. pp. 154-157. Robert Redfield, *The Little Community.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1955, pp. 132-137.

[6] Personal communication. The writer is greatly indebted to Professor Redfield for his advisement concerning the point of departure and the field work relative to this paper.

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121 acts with the folk or low tradition, and is influenced by it from
795 the "grass-roots" level[7]. If we regard these extremes—the high tradition and the low tradition—as two ends of the continuum from formal to folk Catholicism, we may be able to determine something about their effect upon each other. A more careful analysis of Catholic cultures may be possible, however, by including the intermediate positions of nominal and cultural Catholicism, not emphasizing the degree to which the religious beliefs are practiced in terms of the Church's own goals, but rather, the forms which Catholicism manifests. In this sense, Tepoztlán
[114] is again restudied, both to secure additional information, and to permit a different sort of participant observation by an anthropologist practicing the faith of the villagers he studies.

One basic reason for selecting for this study the village of Tepoztlán was that here was manifested in bold relief the frontier where formal and folk Catholicism meet. The natural
793 center of any formal Catholic activity rests locally with the parish priest who is pastor of the Church in a specific geographic area. In Tepoztlán, Dom Pedro Rojas has held this post for the past thirty-six years, under appointment by the Archbishop of
793 Cuernavaca. His role, however, becomes somewhat complex
794 because his parish is made up of seven semi-independent units known as barrios, each of which centers around a smaller church (iglesita) or chapel of which he is also the pastor, and which in all formal matters is accountable to him. Nonetheless each of these chapels does function with some degree of independence, pointing up the significance of folk Catholicism, as will be illustrated later in this brief account.

In addition to having had the advantage of studying the
114 works already accomplished about this village, the present discussion is based upon personal observations made during two summer field seasons. The writer and his wife spent four consecutive week-ends in Tepoztlán during August 1955, and lived
123 in the village continuously during August and the early days
794 of September, 1956. We participated in the daily social and

[7] Robert Redfield, *Peasant Society and Culture*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1956, pp. 67-104.

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religious life of the people, both in the parish Church of Santa Maria del Asunción, which is situated on the central plaza, and in the various fiestas and other activities of the neighborhoods or barrios. The investigator and his wife were accepted in the parish Church as well as in all of the barrio chapels, as practicing Catholics, rather than as interested onlookers. This was the major point of departure, which aided us in dealing with informants, and in interpreting religious practices, because of having familiarity with the intentions and meaning of Catholic rituals and ceremonies. To the degree to which a religious belief or experience may be considered a fact, we shared with the village people a common reality, vital to us and to them.

All of the seven barrios and their chapels were visited by the investigator. A plan was worked out by which some selectivity operated in making our observations. The barrio and chapel of Santa Cruz were visited during the annual fiesta, which occurred early in our stay, and gave us an introduction to the way in which deep religious feeling and social festivity are fused in their expression in the fiestas in this village. The barrio and chapel of San Sebastian were visited a number of times in connection with a fiesta which will be reported later in this paper. The barrio and chapel of San Miguel were chosen for daily visits, at varying times of the day, in order to find out what might be expected in a particular barrio chapel. The parish Church was visited on the same basis, for purposes of comparison and contrast. This brought about opportunities for frequent observations in the barrio and chapel of La Santissima, which is contiguous to the plaza. The barrio and chapel of Santo Domingo, lying below the plaza on the slope toward the valley, and the barrios of San Pedro and Los Reyes near the crest of the hillside high above the plaza, all three are more distant from the center of activity and were less frequently visited.

Interviews with informants were non-directed and limited in scope. Aid was proferred from several sources, and in general the field work notes were gathered with an eye toward the priest's position and activities, and the activities of certain

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12/ lay persons who expressed their religious devotion by leadership or participation in barrio chapel and parish affairs.

12/ 795 The first problem facing the investigator is a definition of the Church, both in terms of Her reality as an institution, and in terms of Her view of Herself. From the standpoint of social organization, the Church is a growing organism, subject to culture change and culture retention. From the standpoint of the Church, it is necessary as a part of that same reality, to view the Church as She views Herself.

In a resume of a paper which he delivered before the American Catholic Sociological Society in 1955, Dr. Rudolph E. Morris makes the following point:

> The customary typology of religion refers to prophetic and organized religion, or to a sect—and church-types of religion. The underlying idea is that religious movements generally start out as prophetic ideas of a single man through personal inspiration and that they are later on institutionalized and put into the 'strait-jackets' of dogma and ritual. . . . These types of typology are insufficient to explain Christianity in its growth and development. Christianity was instituted from the very outset as Church, by Christ Himself; he who believes in the Incarnation, in God made Man, understands religion as likewise 'incarnated', i.e., set up as an institution which guarantees continuity in the stream of time. . . . taking account of this primary institutionalization of religion, distinguishes from it a second level of institutionalization. This one refers to the external day-to-day organization and activities of the Church, especially in its lower units, the parishes. On this second level of institutionalization the organs of the Church not only try to adjust reasonably into their respective environments; they show, also, a tendency toward totally fitting into the environment. . . . The hope is expressed . . . that sociologists may be able in helping to solve the present confusion by developing a structural analysis of the Church in Her manifold units and by studying the conditions under which religious experience can, within the framework of the instituted Church, function as a fertilizer for the growth of the Mystical Body of Christ.

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It is readily seen from this that one can view formal Catholicism both in terms of religious phenomena as such, and also in terms of the goals and ends of the Church as She conceives of Herself. In principle the Church need not be dependent upon social organization, although of necessity She must operate within it. There is this difference between formal Catholicism as such, and those aspects of cultural and folk Catholicism which are reflected in what Redfield terms the "social organization of tradition."

In the village of Tepoztlán, we may identify formal Catholicism as being materially expressed by the parish Church and the pastor. Nominal Catholicism is represented here as elsewhere by that portion of the population which claims to be Catholic, but does not observe with any great faithfulness the wishes, the spirit, or the laws of the Church. Cultural Catholicism is demonstrated in the social implications of holy days, holidays and fiestas which originate in liturgical religious observances but become indistinguishable in the minds of some, from patriotic or ethnocentric celebrations. Folk Catholicism is manifested in demonstrations of fireworks as a part of Catholic worship, indigenous artistic expression used in decorations of chapels and images, special meanings given to saints which have developed in the santos cult, and in lay participation in barrio chapel affairs with the onus of responsibility upon the layman, without the presence of the village pastor.

The presence of neighborhood shrines, which are actually small churches dedicated to a patron saint who thus becomes the patron of the barrio, from the Catholic point of view, presents a unique problem in terms of religious activity in the village. The barrio and the chapel are known by the name of the patron saint, whose image is placed on the main altar, and whose fiesta is observed each year according to the liturgical calendar of the Catholic Church. The chapel and certain lands adjoining it, are the property of the barrio. The seven barrios are geographically delineated, each having its own point of view regarding its importance, the importance of the patron saint, and its relationship to religious action. Barrio member-

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ship is hereditary, and represents strong social identification in addition to religious significance. Dual membership is possible, in that one automatically is a permanent member of the first barrio in which one lives, but upon moving into another, becomes also a member of the one in which residence occurs. Each barrio maintains distinctive and to a certain extent, independent activities, which offer to the investigator the opportunity to make a more precise analysis of religious behaviour.

If one may speak of the Tepoztecans as "folk", and their indigenous barrio activities as folk Catholicism, then we may say that the folk were viewed in terms of their membership not only in the barrio chapels but in the formal Church as well. For example, each barrio fiesta represents an important expression of social and religious life, but baptisms, marriages, and funerals of barrio members take place in the parish Church. The obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and holy days is usually fulfilled in the parish Church, although it may be fulfilled by attendance at Mass in any one of the barrio chapels when provision for this has been made. The reception of the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Communion takes place in the barrio chapel only by special arrangement; whereas in the parish Church these Sacraments may be received daily. Daily visits to pray take place in chapels and in the parish Church, but the pastor officiates at the services in the parish Church, while lay people lead the Rosary in the chapels. Thus the low tradition of the Church represented by the folk Catholicism of the barrios, is in continual interaction with the high tradition, represented by the formal Catholicism of the parish Church.

The eminent social scientist, Dr. Manuel Gamio, once made a distinction between what he called "pagan Catholicism" and Roman Catholicism in Mexico. Many other authorities have pointed out similarities between Christian practices and those of the various ancient Mexican religions. Vaillant has given a clear picture of the parallel between the hierarchy of the Christian saints and the Aztec point of view regarding their gods, pointing out that

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> . . . while the ancient Mexicans extended their ceremonialism to greater lengths than do most of the ritualized Christian sects, yet the relationship between the Aztecs and their gods and the Christians and their saints is not so very dissimilar, different as are the ultimate concepts of the two religions.[8]

In approaching Catholicism anthropologically, one must consider the culture retention which obtains from earlier practices and culture change within the dynamics of the social organization of the Church. M. D. W. Jeffreys has developed this thought in his recent very instructive article, "Some Rules of Directed Culture Change under Roman Catholicism".[9] In the beginning of the Catholic Church in Mexico, following the Conquest, the Spanish friars built upon the then already existing patterns of religious behaviour. Some have maintained that the ancient forms were merely superimposed upon paganism, as a kind of veneer. The answer to this claim lies in the fact that from the beginning, the Catholic Church has followed the purpose "not to destroy, but to fulfill". [177]

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The perennial question arises, especially in the barrios, as to what kind of relation exists between the people and the formal Church. Among Catholics everywhere, the concept of saintly intervention is a common one indeed. The barrio chapels are dedicated to saints, who have been said to have become the gods of the barrios. It is recognized that there is some relationship between the practice of patronizing a saint and earlier Aztec practices common in this village. It does not follow, however, that because of the strong Aztec influences of the past, or the similarities to be found between Aztec and Catholic practices, the nature of the Communion of Saints in the Christian tradition is entirely missed. Simple people do not readily distinguish pure spirit, and require symbols to represent such mysteries as the Godhead or the Trinity. There is much evidence to the effect that religious feelings and beliefs in the barrios though expressed through folk ways, are in harmony with the formal

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[8] George C. Vaillant, *The Aztecs of Mexico*. New York, Doubleday Doran & Co., 1944. Penguin Books, Pelican Edition, 1950, p. 178.

[9] *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 58, No. 4, (August, 1956), pp. 721-731.

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794 intentions of the Catholic Church; and that the formal
795 Church, in turn, affects the expression of religious feelings and beliefs thus influencing the folk practices.

What then is indigenous to the folk, and what is superimposed
796 by the formal Church, through Her representatives in the hierarchy? This may be illustrated by the observation of the Feast of the Assumption, August fifteenth. The Feast was celebrated in the parish Church as a Holy Day of Obligation of the Universal Church, with Masses as on Sundays, and special ceremonies, decorations and observances in honor of the Virgin's Assumption into Heaven.

The little barrio of San Sebastian also celebrated this Feast with certain indigenous practices. A statue of the Virgin known
[778] as Our Lady in Transito had a prominent part in the observances:
[794] it appears to belong jointly to San Sebastian Chapel and that of another village. Each year on the Vigil of this Feast, the statue is brought in procession from one chapel to the other, to remain alternate years in each chapel.

At five o'clock in the morning, the day was heralded by the shooting off of fireworks and the ringing of the chapel bells.
[793] At nine o'clock, Mass was said by a visiting priest from Cuernavaca, invited by the barrio, with the permission of Padre Rojas. The Mass followed the exact formalities of the Mass as found in the parish Church, or any Catholic Church, including sung responses in Latin accompanied by organ music, and a sermon on the meaning of the Assumption. Following the Mass there was recitation of the Litany of the Saints, with responses in the vernacular, the saying of the Rosary, and Benediction. Since the Reserved Sacrament is not kept in this chapel, or in any of the barrio chapels, the priest consumed the Host following Benediction. This was the only variation from Benediction as it is observed in the parish Church.

At the conclusion of these ceremonies, in which deep and genuine religious feeling was observed on the part of the wor-
[535] shippers, the congregation withdrew to the churchyard, where the children in costume, performed the dance known as Los

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Pastores, accompanied by a three-man band. The dancing continued for most of the day, ending in the afternoon with a religious dance inside the chapel which appeared to have been based upon the imparting of the Kiss of Peace in the High Mass. Participation in the religious meaning of the ceremonial dance was extended to the congregation by the distribution of fruit and flowers to each person present. Much incense was burned, and hymns were sung. All of the candles on the altar, and many large, specially decorated candles were lighted. At the end of the ceremony, during which there was much evidence of emotion, the congregation backed out of the chapel, still singing hymns, and the procession formed to return to their village amid the shooting off of fireworks, and music by the three-man band. All of these afternoon activities including the services in the chapel, took place in the absence of a priest, led entirely by laymen. In one sense, all of these rituals were formal and liturgical, but in terms of freedom of expression and the particular patterns of the barrio, the rituals were representative of the folk.

According to Padre Rojas, Catholic life in the barrios is regulated by him. To him, the chapels are extensions of the formal Church; their activities are reflections of the wishes of the formal Church. Each barrio mayordomo consults with him regularly about plans for such matters as the hours for the ringing of chapel bells, arrangements for Mass, activities in preparation for fiestas, and similar formalities. The functional responsibility for carrying out these plans is with the people, rather than with the priest. It is they who join forces to work the land belonging to the chapel; to prepare for the fiestas. It is they who keep the chapels decorated and cleaned, bringing fresh flowers, candles and incense when they wish to do so. It is the people who assume responsibility for seeing that the chapel is kept locked at night and at those times during the day when no one is about to guard it. The people come in spontaneously when the chapels are open, to pray and meditate.

San Miguel Chapel, which is situated on the main road from Cuernavaca was always open from dawn to eventide. It was

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observed that on many days, a small group of people, mostly women, gathered in the late afternoon, lighted the candles on the main altar, and said the Rosary, singing hymns between each decade. In this they were usually led by an elderly woman cantora who also sang the responses when a sung Mass was offered in that chapel. Thus she formed a kind of bridge between the high tradition of the formal Church and the low tradition of the barrio activities. One noticed the independence of barrio folkways, although as has been noted, the pastor considered that no official barrio chapel activity was in existence save through his permission, and in this the folk appeared to concur.

It was our observation that in both the main Church and in the barrio chapels, the priest directs the parish in terms of the expectations of the high tradition. The Forty Hours Devotion, which is regularly observed in all dioceses and archdioceses of the Catholic Church is observed annually in Tepoztlán, sometimes in the barrio chapels, sometimes in the main church. If a new devotion is to be introduced, the pastor must give his permission. This was illustrated in the fact that although there is evidence of great devotion to the Virgin under the title of Our Lady of Guadalupe, there is also devotion to her in this village under the guise of Our Lady of Fatima. Pictures of the Fatima apparition were found in the parish Church and in every one of the barrio chapels. It was learned that this devotion was introduced by a local layman, who with the pastor's permission. gave the pictures and spread the devotion. His interest was extended among the barrio folk so that in San Miguel Chapel, a statue of Our Lady of Fatima was purchased with funds collected in the barrio. This bore out the previous studies which showed that there is considerable rivalry among the barrios, and that there is a need for each to distinguish itself in some way, thus bringing it into prominence among the village folk.

A practice which is deeply rooted in religious custom and human observance from time immemorial is that of the eating of symbolic food. This was observed in Tepoztlán in the formal Church as well as in the barrio chapels at the time of fiestas in

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the reception of Holy Communion. As a part of the social celebration, special foods are also prepared, and there is general feasting. A humble resident of San Pedro invited us to visit again at fiesta time, explaining that "the fiesta is good, as there is much beer and punch". This social feasting was observed particularly in the barrio of Santa Cruz both preceding and following the Solemn High Mass at noon, which marked the climax of the fiesta. Padre Rojas was the celebrant, assisted by two priests visiting from Cuernavaca, one of whom delivered an eloquent sermon on the meaning of the occasion. The large congregation present responded with deep feeling which was expressed in various ways. The loud ringing of bells both inside and outside the chapel, together with the setting off of fireworks at the Consecration, were among the unusual features of this expression. This is a folk practice which obtains in all of the barrio fiesta celebrations.

There appears to be some confusion among scholars about folk practices among Catholics which relate to medical superstitions. In Tepoztlán we found that there are still several curanderos, or folk doctors, who practice rather extensively, although there is a young physician resident in the village who is a graduate of the University of Mexico's School of Medicine; and a free Public Health Clinic is in daily operation. It is difficult to separate some of the practices of the curanderos from magical or religious meanings. Frazer has suggested that much of the Aztec sacrifice and ceremonial is magical, but not religious.

One of the chief curanderos of Tepoztlán has seven wives, and is quite wealthy. He is a colorful character, having a certain degree of importance and prestige. Many people whose Catholicism ranges from formal to folk, patronize him in preference to going to the local physician. Yet his marital status is not approved by the formal Church, and his Catholic "patients" do not think of him in terms of his private interpretation of marital life, but rather as one who possesses special knowledge which will help them to overcome infirmities. Julian Pitt-Rivers has described a similar situation in an Andalusian village of

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759 Spain, where a woman cures by saying appropriate prayers.[10]
171 Although she cannot be formally recognized by the priest, she is an accepted cultural entity in Catholic village life, much as is the case in Tepoztlán.

794 It might be supposed that there is a normal reciprocity be-
795 tween priest and laity, between the formal Church and the barrio chapel, between the high tradition and the low tradition. This reciprocity or series of expectations formulates the basis of society in Tepoztlán, where the formal Church organizes Herself pretty much as do formal churches anywhere, regardless of the underlying interactions between formal and folk Catholicism. To be sure, in any society the proscriptions of the Church do not always coincide with the culturally approved patterns.

Under the title of Catholic Action, there are three or four
575 parish organizations. These include one for men, one for
794 women, and one for boys. As parts of the nation-wide Acción
795 Católica, these groups are considered to be somewhat weak, although when they do meet, usually about once a week, the pastor is present, and they discuss "Catholic principles and ways".

796 In addition to daily Mass in the parish Church each morning, Padre Rojas presides at "La Doctrina" each evening. This includes Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, recitation of the Rosary, reading of the liturgy of Vespers of the day, the singing of hymns, and Benediction. Usually there are more women present than men, but people of all ages were observed in attendance. Some days the group was relatively large; on other days only a few people came. The factor of ritual as well as religious attraction is paramount in such devotions. Indeed
795 there is sometimes a wide gap between ritualistic propitiation
796 of God, and moral practices among the folk. To the sophisticated Catholic, ritual and morality are synthesized; but to the folk there are cleavages which, in Tepoztlán, appear to reflect Indian practices. As Father J. Franklin Ewing, S.J. states, "In many discussions it is necessary to distinguish between what an anth-

[10] Julian Pitt-Rivers, *The People of the Sierra*. New York: Criterion Books, 1954.

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ropological friend of mine calls 'folk-Catholicism' and the attitude of theologians and other well-educated Catholics"[11]. In the case of the fiesta, we have an extension of a religious pattern which overflows into the social organization of the village.

It is seen, then, that the parish priest has considerable influence over the religious activities of the village[12], and at the same time, the barrio people do carry on a certain amount of indigenous religious life, expressed in various patterns, accountable to the formal Church, but not always a full part of it, although not in conflict with it.

In conclusion it may be said that the barrio world of Tepoztlán represents the low tradition in Catholicism, and that it interacts with the formal Church representing the high tradition. If the observer is not too familiar with Catholic practices, it is possible that an interpretation of the findings in terms of social organization alone will miss important points. If the observer shares Catholicism with the observed, there may be greater accuracy in appraising Catholic practices. Mistakes may be made, but there is an acceptance of the investigator on the part of the people who will thus discuss those aspects of the investigation which are Catholic in essence with a different focus than when speaking to a non-Catholic investigator. The observer of religious patterns in Tepoztlán can see the interaction of folk and formal Catholicism as a pattern of culture, meaningful both to the parish priest and to the members of the barrios. If the Catholic participant observer can maintain genuine objectivity while admitting his set of values, then we have an additional source of interpretation of religious patterns. These patterns cannot be seen as merely formal, or as merely folk, but rather as operating on a continuum, with the expected interaction of the several parts. The total result will be one more tool for the analysis of religious behaviour, for as Everett Hughes has pointed out, the whole of sociology has manifested itself within the bounds

[11] *Anthropological Quarterly*, Vol. 29, (New Series Vol. 4), No. 4, (October, 1956), p. 123.

[12] In this connection, see Nathan L. Whetten, *Rural Mexico*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1948, Chapter XIX, "Religion and the Rural Church", pp. 454-483.

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121 795 of Roman Catholicism[18]. We might add that anthropological techniques can be further refined to enhance our study of village folk life along these lines.

Can the Catholic observer in largely Catholic areas retain objectivity? Certainly his scientific norms will be no different from those of other observers. His only advantage is in his role as a participant observer who is accepted as a Catholic. This advantage can be used constructively or otherwise, depending upon the circumstances surrounding his Catholicity. As for the villagers themselves, whether in the role of the parish priest and his major assistants, or in the role of the mayordomos and other barrio helpers, the investigator is looked upon as one who can and does share in some of the deeply emotional patterns of a religious nature. Any investigator can recognize that in rural Mexico, Catholicism was superimposed upon a previous system, but whether or not the factual details of the Catholic Faith are recognized implies considerable familiarity with Catholic thought. Of course it must be admitted that if Catholicism is a religious fact, as well as a fact of social organization to the observer, it might be anticipated that some recognition would be given to the essentials of the formal Church while not discounting the indigenous folkways of the people, as is so frequently observed in barrio religious life.

177 795 [121] It has been our final conclusion and one which we were not predisposed to accept, that the folk expression of Catholicism in this village appears to be in conformity with the formal intentions of the Roman Catholic Church. This is the reversal of our initial impression. Some Aztec residues which have been transposed into Catholic form were noted, along with evidences of early Spanish interpretation of Catholicism which are unique to that culture. Upon this foundation has been built, however, a genuine indigenous form of religious expression which is truly folk in that

[18] Everett C. Hughes, "The Early and the Contemporary Study of Religion; An Editorial Foreword", *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. LX, No. 6, (May, 1955), pp i-iv.

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it arises out of the inner feelings and convictions of the people, and truly Catholic in that it is in harmony with the intentions of the formal Church. 177 795